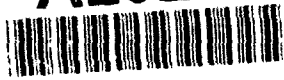


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Selecting Senior Civilian Leaders in the Army

Barbara Heffernan
Department of the Army

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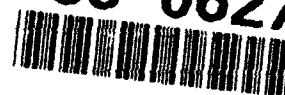
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SELECTING SENIOR CIVILIAN LEADERS IN THE ARMY

By

Barbara Heffernan

ABSTRACT

Is the Army inadvertently not selecting the best individuals for career Senior Executive Service (SES) positions? Army SES positions are spread across a variety of technical and administrative job categories. Given the differences in SES positions, it appears that individuals need to bring different "skills" to these jobs to be successful. Selecting officials need to know what general and peculiar skills are necessary for successful performance in different positions. The literature on leadership and "effective executives" shows there are certain characteristics that "effective executives" need to be successful. The Office of Personnel Management and the Army Research Institute have both been working in this area. The study recommends the Army determine if factors necessary for success in SES positions differ for the different kinds of positions; if changes need to be made in the selection process; if the selection process should include the use of standardized tests; and if the civilian organization needs restructuring to better define the manager-subordinate relationship.

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Selecting Senior Civilian Leaders in the Army

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Faculty Research Advisor
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Background	
What is the Senior Executive Service?	3
What are the rules and regulations governing the Senior Executive Service?	4
How does the Army make Senior Executive Service selections?	6
Review of the Literature	7
What is an effective executive?	8
Are effective executives born or are they developed?	10
Qualities of Effective Executives	11
Stratified Systems Theory	16
The Government's Look at the Senior Executive Service	
The Army	18
The Office of Personnel Management	21
The <u>Management Excellence Framework</u>	27
The <u>Management Excellence Inventory</u>	33
Executive Development Programs	35
Conclusions and Recommendations	36
Works Cited	41
Notes	43

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SELECTING SENIOR CIVILIAN LEADERS IN THE ARMY

Robert Katz in "The Skills of an Effective Administrator," offers an approach for selection and development of "effective executives" which "is based not on what good executives are (their innate traits and characteristics), but rather on what they do (the kinds of skills which they exhibit in carrying out their jobs effectively)" (Katz 396). In describing what they do he maintains that technical, human, and conceptual skills can be learned and that "good administrators are not necessarily born; they may be developed" (Katz 409).

INTRODUCTION

Within the Department of the Army, there are approximately 350 Senior Executive Service (SES) positions. These positions are spread across a wide variety of technical (for example, engineers and scientists) and administrative (for example, comptrollers, lawyers and personnel specialists) job categories.¹ Not only do the job categories vary widely, but the positions are also spread out at all levels of the Army organization.

Given the differences in SES positions in the Army, it appears that individuals need to bring different "skills" to these positions in order to be successful. Does a scientist sitting on a bench, or pathologist in a laboratory need the same

skills to be successful as a headquarters policy manager? To answer this question one must first ask the following questions: How does the Army select individuals for appointment to these positions? What qualities does the selecting individual or panel look for during the process? Does the selection official consider the specific or peculiar qualities of each position? And lastly, are there any behavioral or personality traits, specific to the different positions, that an individual would need to be successful?

None of these questions is easy to answer. Although there is an abundance of literature on executive leadership and the characteristics of successful leaders, little has been written on either how the government selects senior civilian leaders, or on specific requirements needed for successful performance in Senior Executive Service positions. Graham Allison in his paper "Public and Private Management: Are They Fundamentally Alike in All Unimportant Respects?" says,

"While there is a level of generality at which management is management, whether public or private, functions that bear identical labels take on rather different meaning in public and private settings'. Further, '. . . there are vast differences in the management of government organizations" (Allison).

The central issue this paper will address is whether the Army is inadvertently not selecting the best individuals to fill career SES positions. There is no question that the Army goes through a rigorous and meticulous process for selecting their senior civilian leadership. However, the key question is "Are they missing important information regarding the kinds of personality or behavioral characteristics that are necessary for

successful performance in specific positions?"

In this paper I will begin by providing background information on the rules and regulations governing the SES and how the Army goes about selecting its career senior civilian leaders. The sections that follow will include a review of the literature on characteristics and qualities of successful senior leaders and a look at what a select group of federal agencies is doing in this area, along with current initiatives within the Army. The conclusions and recommendations I draw from this research may be useful to the Army, not only for future research, but also in the eventual selection of individuals to Senior Executive Service positions.

BACKGROUND

What is the Senior Executive Service?

As described in FPM Supplement 920-1, the Senior Executive Service came into being as part of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1979 (Public Law 95-454). The new Senior Executive Service included most of the managerial, supervisory, and policy making positions in the Executive Branch of the federal government which were previously classified at the General Service (GS) 16-18 levels or levels IV and V of the Executive Schedule where Senate confirmation was not required (FPM 1-3).

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is "to ensure that the executive management of the Government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the

nation and otherwise is of the highest quality'" (FPM 1-3). To accomplish this, under the Civil Service Reform Act of 1979, the individual agencies were granted greater authority to manage their respective SES programs. Although the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) remains responsible for policy, guidance, assistance, research, and oversight of the Senior Executive Service, operational responsibilities lie with the agencies (FPM 1-4 to 1-5).

What are the rules and regulations governing the Senior Executive Service?

The authoritative government document (which contains both statute and regulation) that sets out the principles, guidelines and procedures for the agencies to follow is FPM Supplement 920-1, Operations Handbook for the Senior Executive Service.

By statute, each agency within the Federal Government must establish an Executive Resources Board, or ERB. The purpose of the ERB is to "conduct the merit staffing process for career entry into the Senior Executive Service" (FPM 2-3). The board's primary responsibility in the selection process is to review the qualifications of all eligible candidates and make recommendations to the selecting official. However, at the agency's discretion, the ERB can also be given additional responsibilities to include approval of qualification standards, recommending how to fill positions, and "rating and ranking candidates" (FPM 5-3). FPM 920-1 states that agencies "should have written merit

staffing procedures so that all parties, including selecting officials and applicants, understand how SES positions are filled" (FPM 5-3).

Before I conclude this section on rules and regulations governing the Senior Executive Service, it is important to note there are two different kinds of Senior Executive Service positions. First, there are General positions. These positions can be filled with career employees, non-career individuals, or with limited term appointments. The second kind of Senior Executive Service position is a Career Reserved position. These positions can only be filled with career Civil Service employees (FPM 4-3). The distinction here is important. These are the individuals who provide the long-term continuity and senior leadership in the government, unlike the non-career (political) or limited term appointees who hold positions for only a short time.

It is important to note too, that by law, before an individual can receive an initial career appointment to the Senior Executive Service they must prove their competence on the following generic executive qualifications (FPM 5-5):

1. "Integration of internal and external program/policy issues. . . .
2. Organizational representation and liaison. . . .
3. Direction and guidance of programs, projects, or policy development. . . .

4. Acquisition and administration of financial and material resources. . . .
5. Utilization of human resources. . . .
6. Review of implementation and results" (FPM 5-21 to 5-22).

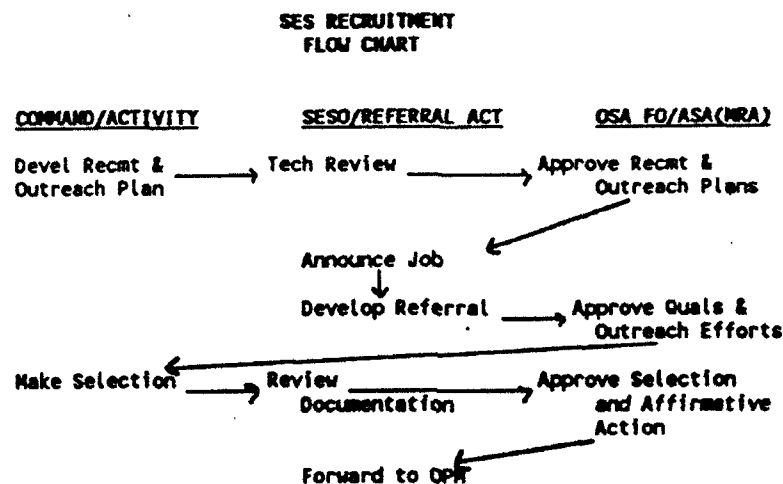
The agencies use these six generic qualifications/competencies as the basis for selecting all Senior Executive Service positions. They supplement these qualifications with specific technical skills required for individual positions.

How does the Army make Senior Executive Service selections?

According to Elizabeth Throckmorton, Chief of the Army Senior Executive Service Office, the Army follows the general guidance set out in FPM Supplement 920-1 to implement its Senior Executive Service program. Ad-hoc policy making, however, has resulted over the years because the Army does not have a supplement to this regulation. At this time, however, a supplement is nearing completion (Throckmorton).

Selecting officials within the Army have wide latitude in setting out the parameters they will use for hiring senior executives. They determine, for example, whether or not there will be an interview, if background references will be checked, and the specific technical qualifications needed for the position (they also have the authority to determine if there are specific behavioral or personality qualifications for a position) (Throckmorton).

What does occur uniformly within the Army is that all applications go before a rating panel. Subsequent to that however, the procedure is not uniform - there are times when the applications go to a selection panel, and there are even times when they go to a second rating panel. The chart below shows how the recruitment and selection process takes place within the Army (Throckmorton).



REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

One thing that is very clear when undertaking a review of this subject is that there is very little literature which speaks specifically to senior leaders or executives in the government. For the most part it appears, that the Office of Personnel Management and the Army (or experts in association with the Army) performed most of the research in this area.

Also, there is no one set of nomenclature in the literature

to portray effective executives. The literature talks about effective leaders, administrators, and strategic leaders, in addition to effective executives. In this paper I will generally use the term "effective executives."

Before describing what appears to be both the common and "uncommon" qualities of effective executives, two things must be done. First an attempt must be made to define what an effective executive is. Second, a brief review of the question of whether an individual is born with the characteristics necessary to become an "effective executive," whether or not those characteristics can be learned, or whether some combination of the two takes place, is in order.

What is an effective executive?

" Robert Katz, in, "Skills of an Effective Administrator," admits there is little agreement on what makes a good executive (Katz 395). Blake and Mouton, in Executive Achievement, Making it at the Top, also acknowledge that effective leadership is not well understood but describe it using six elements of leadership (Blake 10). "Effective leadership means finding sound solutions to problems and engaging in innovative activities that are productive, creative, and pertinent to the organization purpose" (Blake 14).

Peter Drucker, in The Effective Executive, feels that although effective executives are different, what they all have in common "is the practices that make effective whatever they

have and whatever they are" (Drucker 22-23). It doesn't matter whether a person works for the government, is in business or works anywhere else, the practices are the same. "Effectiveness . . . is a habit; that is a complex of practices" (Drucker 23).

Elliot Jaques in Requisite Organization - The CEO's Guide to Creative Structure and Leadership, takes a different approach.

Jaques feels it is an effective organization, not creative leaders that are important - the effective organization makes sure the right people are at the top. "Desirable products and services, and a highly creative leader, may give a competitive edge in the short- and mid-term, despite serious shortcomings in organization. In the long-term, however, sustained success and even survival depend upon effective organization" (Jaques memo).

In "Leadership in Complex Systems," Jacobs and Jaques describe the Stratified Systems Theory. They state that at each level of an organization there are critical tasks which effective executives (or as they say, strategic leaders) must be able to address. Only through growth in cognitive (conceptual) capacity can an individual be effective at the various levels (or stratum) of an organization (Jacobs 17). A more detailed discussion of the Stratified Systems Theory will appear later in this paper.

Lewis and Jacobs in "Individual Differences in Strategic Leadership Capacity: A Constructive/Developmental View," take the Stratified Systems Theory a step further. They argue that "conceptual capacity is a broad set of 'constructive' capacities which include the capacity for integration, abstraction,

independent thought, and the use of broad and complex frames of reference" (Lewis 2).

And, lastly, David Campbell in "The Challenge of Assessing Leadership Characteristics," defines leadership very succinctly as "actions which focus resources to create desirable opportunities" (Campbell 1).

Although it is clear there is no one common definition of an "effective executive", what will become apparent later in this paper is that there are characteristics that appear to be common to most "effective executives." From this review, it also appears impossible to talk about "effective executives" without talking about the organization in which they exist.

Are effective executives born or are they developed?

Again, there is no consensus in the literature on the subject of whether "effective executives" are born or if they can be developed. Peter Drucker's response to this issue is that there is no "effective personality" (Drucker 21), that effectiveness is "a habit" (Drucker 23) and, therefore effectiveness can be learned.

Katz, on the other hand, does not directly deal with the question of what "executives are" . . . but rather on what they do (the kinds of skills which they exhibit in carrying out their jobs effectively)" (Katz 396), thereby challenging the idea that "effective executives" are always born. However, in an update to his original research (twenty years later), he modifies his

position somewhat. One of the three skills (technical, human and conceptual) he feels an "effective executive" must have, conceptual skill, he later determined might, after all, be an innate ability (or possibly learned at a very early age - but not capable of being developed later on) (Katz 410-411). With this change, Katz, to a certain extent, acknowledges that leaders may be born (although he continues to feel the other two skills can be developed).

Qualities of Effective Executives

What follows is a review of how several researchers describe the qualities, or characteristics, of "effective executives." Although specific nomenclature differs between them, what is clear is that certain characteristics are common to many.

As stated earlier, Katz's article looks at what executives do, not what they are (he also assumes that an "administrator" is an individual who directs what other people do for the purpose of meeting objectives). Successful administration, he feels, is dependent upon "technical, human and conceptual" skills (Katz 396). Of particular interest is his idea of conceptual skills since it relates closely to the work of Jaques, Jacobs and Lewis. He describes conceptual skills as a "'general management point of view,' . . . [which] involves always thinking in terms of the following: relative emphases and priorities among conflicting objectives and criteria; relative tendencies and probabilities (rather than certainties); rough correlations and patterns among

elements (rather than clear-cut cause-and-effect relationships" (Katz 410). Another important point is he feels that each of these three basic skills might be needed at each level of the organization (although in differing degrees).

Drucker's research provides us with the five practices he feels all executives should learn in order to be effective: "Effective executives know where their time goes, focus on outward contribution, build on strengths, concentrate on the few major areas where superior performance will produce outstanding results, [and] make effective decisions" (Drucker 23-24).

Corts and Gowing in their draft work, "Dimensions of Effective Behavior - Executives, Managers, and Supervisors," use the managerial framework Howard and Bray (1988) derived on successful managerial performance from over 40 years of research at American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) (Corts 1). Howard and Bray's research includes 26 factors (described in detail in the accompanying notes²) grouped in five broad areas - administrative skills, interpersonal skills, stability of performance, advancement motivation, and independence (Corts 5-45).

The authors used the Howard and Bray work as a framework under which they subsumed a wide variety of leadership and management data. As a result of their research, they established a listing of personally and organizationally oriented management competencies. The individual competencies include written communication, oral communication, problem solving, interpersonal

responsiveness, cultural objectivity, vision, innovation, flexibility, decisiveness, leadership, behavioral values, self-objectivity, and influence/negotiate (Corts 54-54). The organizational competencies include planning and evaluating, financial management, human resource management, client orientation, external focus, empowerment, team focus, and technology management (Corts 54-55). The Corts and Gowing research is the cornerstone for much of the work currently being done by the Office of Personnel Management in the area of executive effectiveness and development. The importance of the Corts and Gowing work will be discussed later in this paper.

In "The Challenge of Assessing Leadership Characteristics," David Campbell describes his leadership index as derived from seven tasks which must take place for leadership to occur - "vision, management, empowerment, politics, feedback, entrepreneurship and personal style" (Campbell 1). From these tasks he goes on to describe the personal characteristics that are necessary for achievement of each of them.³

Blake and Mouton's six elements of leadership are initiative, inquiry, advocacy, conflict solving, decision making, and critique (Blake 11). They also heavily emphasize what they call "corporate culture" or the "bottom line" (Blake 1). The corporate culture shows the direct relationship of cause and effect in an organization. Executives in that organization are directly responsible for influencing that corporate culture. For example, an executive shapes the corporate culture through such

things as his projection of corporate vision, role modeling and demonstrating the appropriate attitude towards excellence in the organization (Blake 1-4).

Benchmarks, a psychological instrument by Mike Lombardo, et al, designed to measure leader effectiveness, is made up of sixteen skills and perspectives needed for effective management. They include resourcefulness, doing whatever it takes, being a quick study, decisiveness, leading subordinates, setting a developmental climate, confronting problem subordinates, team orientation, hiring talented staff, building and mending relationships, compassion and sensitivity, straightforwardness and composure, balance between personal life and work, self-awareness, putting people at ease, and acting with flexibility (Lombardo).

It is also interesting to note here some work done by George Gallop and by Michael Hansen (former director of the Federal Executive Institute). Gallop, in The Great American Success Story, describes common qualities that lead some individuals to the top of their fields and keep others from getting there. By interviewing people in Whos Who in America, he identified twelve traits common to what he calls all "high achievers." Those traits are common sense, special knowledge of your field, self-reliance, general intelligence, ability to get things done, leadership, knowing right from wrong, creativity and inventiveness, self-confidence, oral expression, concern for others, and luck (Gallop 55- 56).

As reported by Michael Hansen in the Bureaucrat, in January 1989, the Office of Personnel Management began a new leadership program for members of the Senior Executive Service at the Federal Executive Institute. Maurice Fowler and Lucretia Myers, both members of the Senior Executive Service, and winners of Presidential Rank Awards presented papers at that program on "Leadership of the Future." Each of these individuals described what they determined to be the elements of the leadership process. Fowler's four fundamentals of leadership described in "Getting the Job Done," included vision, communication, direction, and self (Fowler 66-67). By self he means devoting oneself to the "responsibilities of leadership" (Fowler 68). Myers in "How to Get the Job Done," described six characteristics that are important to leadership - motivation, knowledge, empowerment, vision, flexibility, and personal involvement (Myers 78-79).

It becomes obvious from even the small review of the literature in this area that there is no definitive nomenclature to describe an "effective executive." However, it does appear there are several characteristics that cut across most of the research. One could say that "effective executives" generally tend to have vision and are innovative; are avid learners; are flexible, and able to function in complex and uncertain environments; are effective decision makers, and good communicators; are self motivated, and empowered; possess a variety of knowledges and intellectual capacity; and have good

human/interpersonal skills (to include team building and motivation skills). Also, the literature appears to be fairly consistent in finding "effective executives" to have energy and the ability to negotiate (political savvy). Effective executives also have the ability to balance their personal and professional lives.

Stratified Systems Theory

The Stratified Systems Theory provides a different approach to this whole issue by looking at organizations and the roles and functions of those that are successful. The development of Stratified Systems Theory is the result of research done over 35 years with civilian and military organizations (Jaques and Clement 1). The Army uses this theory to address leadership issues.

Stratified Systems Theory, a model of a specific organizational structure, is made of up of seven "requisite" levels or stratum. Each level has its own set of critical tasks, and those tasks are bounded by "time spans or horizons" (the maximum time needed to complete the tasks) (Jacobs 17). The chart that follows provides a brief overview of the Stratified Systems Theory model. What becomes clear as you go up the various organizational levels are the changes in the context and complexity of the work environment and the increase in the maximum amount of time needed to accomplish the tasks at the specific level.

Stratum Structure

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Functional Domain</u>
VII CEO	20 years	Systems Domain - Operates in a nearly unbounded world environment, identifies feasible futures, develops consensus on specific bases to create whole systems that can function in the environment. Conditions environment to be "friendly" to systems created. Creates a corporate culture and value system compatible with social values and culture to serve as a basis for organizational policies and climate.
VI	10 years	

V Gen Mgr	5 years	Organizational Domain - Individuals at stratum V operate bounded open systems thus created, assisted by individuals at stratum IV in managing adaptation of those systems within the environment by modification/maintenance/fine tuning of internal processes and climate and by oversight of subsystems.
IV 1st Level Gen Mgr	2 years	

III 2nd Level Mgr	1 year	Production Domain - Runs face-to-face (mutual recognition or mutual knowledge) subsystems units, or groups engaged in specific differentiated functions but interdependent with other units or groups, limited by context and boundaries set within the larger system.
II 1st Level Mgr	3 months	
I Prod		

(Jacobs 16)

For example, an individual in Stratum I may be a manual worker or a clerk, where that individual's work is prescribed, he is receiving information from superiors in the way of feedback, and he had previously learned the skills for accomplishing the job (Jaques 24). In sharp contrast, in Level VII, the individual is the CEO of a large corporation whose main tasks are in the area of global strategic planning (i.e. joint ventures, mergers, world wide financial markets) and may take upwards of 20 years to

complete (Jaques 30).

Jaques, Clement, Rigby and Jacobs in a recent study, "Senior Leadership Performance Requirements at the Executive Level," collected data on both military and civilian leaders (senior members of the Senior Executive Service) in the Army. Their data points out that generally speaking, career members of the Senior Executive Service, by virtue of the time spans and critical tasks of their positions, are all in Stratum V (although they suspect that new members of the Senior Executive Service may be in Stratum IV and that a few super executives are in Stratum VI) (Jaques and Clement 12).

THE GOVERNMENT'S LOOK AT THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

The Army

From 1983 through 1985, Jaques, Clement, Rigby and Jacobs interviewed 68 Army Lieutenant Generals (three stars), Generals (four stars), and senior members of the Senior Executive Service (career and appointed) to gain an understanding of the nature of the work at the executive levels within the Department of the Army. The purpose of the study was three-fold. First, to gather data on the knowledges, skills and abilities critical for executives at these levels. Second, to gather information on the effectiveness of the development process which brought these individuals into leadership positions. And finally, to test the Stratified Systems Theory (Jaques and Clement 1). For purposes of this paper I will discuss the findings that relate to members

of the Senior Executive Service.

According to the authors, the SES in Stratum V are equivalent to two-star general officers. Citing the fact that it is not uncommon for a SES to be supervised and rated by a Colonel (particularly in technical areas), the authors point out the need for improving the organizational structure of the civilian side (General Service and Senior Executive Service) of the Army. They provide a tentative managerial structure in line with Jaques' work on the requisite organization, and stress the need for a well defined organization. The new organizational structure elevates all members of the Senior Executive Service to at least the two-star general officer level (it eliminates any members of the Senior Executive Service falling into Stratum IV and in fact reserves that level for GS/GM 14 and 15s) and makes them subordinate to 3-star General Officers (Jaques and Clement 13).⁴

The authors note that the knowledges and skills required by Army members of the Senior Executive Service vary widely due to the variety and diversity of Senior Executive Service positions (and the fact there are managerial and non-managerial positions). They even suggest that the SESs be divided into two groups - managers and technical specialists (Jaques and Clement xiv). They feel because of the high degree of specialization in many Senior Executive Service positions it is not possible to define the knowledges required to do those jobs. They do note, however, the following generic knowledges that all senior civilian leaders should have: full knowledge of how the Army works and how it

relates to the Congress; knowledge of operations, strategy and tactics; knowledge of organization culture and values; knowledge of setting policy; and knowledge of budget preparation. They also discuss other skills that senior civilian leaders should have to include: the ability to manage subordinate civilians as well as military; and the social skills needed to be a good member of the particular community in which the individual works (Jaques and Clement 32-33).

Lastly, the authors point out there is no systematic process for career development and progression for civilians. In fact they make the point that where the military orients personnel management to the individual (developing skills through progressive assignments and promotions), civilian management is centered on the job (Jaques and Clement xiii).⁵ This does not speak well for how we develop and train our civilian leaders.

According to Dr. Carlos Rigby, Research Psychologist, Army Research Institute, for the last three years the Army has been working on a study to determine selection criteria for civilian leaders. To do this they broke the civilian workforce into three levels (which correspond to the work of Elliot Jaques): Level I - GS 9 and below; Level II - GS 10 thru 13; and Level III - GM 14 thru 15. Early in the work, Levels I and II were separated from Level III because of differences in job tasks and complexity, and therefore the corresponding differences in determining selection instruments.

The first part of the study, which is nearing completion,

addresses selection of first line leaders who are at Levels I and II in the organization. The second part of this study, will address selection of second level leaders who are at Level III in the organization. As a result of this work, the Army Research Institute plans to develop a set of selection tools which would include a structured interview guide; an in-basket exercise (for Levels I and II); an instrument to gather biographical data; and a temperament instrument. Although this work does not specifically address selection for the Senior Executive Service, it may provide groundwork for that in the future (Rigby).

The Office of Personnel Management

As noted in the beginning of this paper in the discussion on FPM 920-1, the Office of Personnel Management is responsible for defining the qualifications for entry in the Senior Executive Service and providing policy and guidance to the Federal agencies. With their charter in mind, in the late 1970s, they began looking at the broad issue of management in the Federal government.

As reported by Loretta Flanders in the "Senior Executive and Mid Managers' Job Profiles" (April 1980), the Office of Personnel Management sent the Federal Manager's Job and Role Survey to a random sample of Senior Executive Service and GS 13-15 managers in the Federal government (Flanders 1). The purpose of this study was to increase "the knowledge base about the nature of managerial work and responsibilities in the Federal government,"

and to use the information for "enhancing the effectiveness of Federal managers and executives through sound selection, development, and other personnel management processes" (Flanders 4). OPM's initial analysis of the data collected focused on comparing the responses of mid-managers, supervisors and members of the Senior Executive Service (Flanders 4).

In her report, she makes several interesting observations. Due to the use of a random sample in the study, she feels it is unlikely that the general similarities and differences between the management, supervisory and executive levels would differ from agency to agency (Flanders 31). However, she does note several other factors that could effect job activities including "job location (headquarters or field), nature of the function(s) managed, and size of the agency" (Flanders 32). She notes, with regard to job location, for example, that individual members of the Senior Executives Service located in the field "rated the importance of a sound understanding of the 'administrative rules and procedures associated with labor-management relations,' significantly higher than their headquarters counterparts" (Flanders 32).

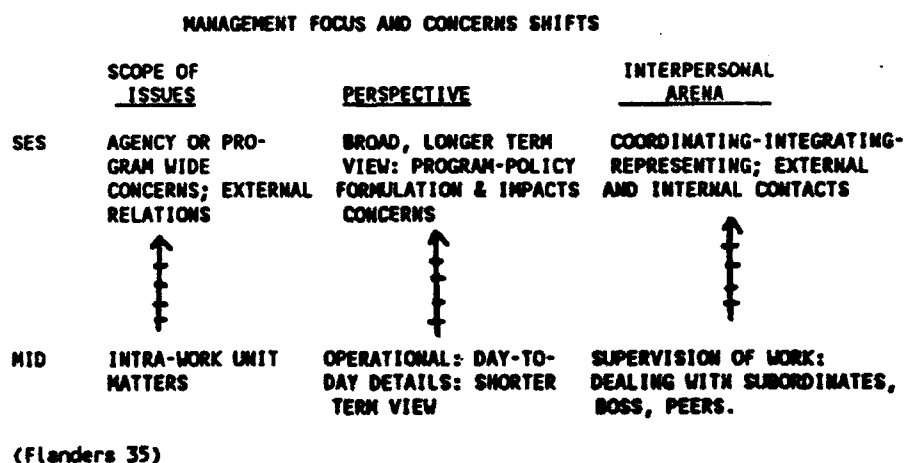
The author maintains that generally the activities of mid and senior level managers are the same. However, the survey did show there were two types of differences between mid-managers and members of the Senior Executive Service -

"(1) differences in emphasis--time and/or importance--in the various common activities (e.g., SESers in general spent more time on 'networking, keeping up-to-date, information dissemination, representing unit' activities than did mid

managers); and (2) differences on specific dimensions of a broad activity (e.g., long range planning as a subset of planning)" (Flanders 34)

She summarizes these as "shifts in focus and concerns in three areas: scope of issues, perspective, and interpersonal skills" (Flanders 34) and looks at them in coordination with the list of activities found to be common among mid-managers and members of the SES (the list of common activities is provided in the notes⁶). As a result, she found that as a person moves up the organizational chain, there is a "broadening and diversification of concerns across the common activities" (Flanders 35).

"Executive management responsibilities are not simply more of the same at a higher level, but involve a change in orientation to carrying out management activities" (Flanders 35). The chart that follows illustrates the shifts which Flanders notes are essentially a continuum from approximately the GS-13 level all the way up through the Senior Executive Service.



Several things resulted from this work. First, the author

provides areas for application of this work to ensuring sound management of mid and senior level managers within the Federal Government. She talks about such things as the need for executive development programs and developmental activities, interagency training courses, and taking a look at position descriptions (to ensure they appropriately balance technical and management activities).⁷ Second, this work, along with additional research conducted by the Office of Personnel Management, became the foundation for the Management Excellence Framework and Management Excellence Inventory developed by the Office of Personnel Management (both will be described later on in this paper).

A second major study, "Senior Executive Service Competencies: A Superior Managers' Model," undertaken at the same time by Rudi Klauss, et al, at the Office of Personnel Management, identified "generic competencies associated with effective performance in Senior Executive Service (SES) positions" (Klauss 1). Thirty-one members of the Senior Executive Service at six Federal agencies were interviewed to determine the "critical skills, abilities, areas of knowledge, and personal characteristics (behaviors/competencies)" (Klauss 4) effective executives use on their jobs. The individuals chosen were outstanding managers, held general, rather than technical positions, and had an extensive amount of government service (Klauss 1). The purpose of this research was to provide information that would help Federal agencies determine selection

criteria for Senior Executives, design development programs, and develop performance appraisals (Klauss 2-3).

The researchers found the following set of generic competencies common to members of the Senior Executive Service: "executive role orientation; interpersonal/group orientation; problem resolution orientation; and, personal predisposition/characteristics" (Klauss 7). A brief discussion of each follows.

1. Executive Role Orientation - These competencies are all externally oriented and allow executives to look at, and work in, the context of the broader environment (Klauss 13).

- Systems View - The external view - "looking beyond the immediate context of an issue to a broader consideration of the environmental context" (Klauss 7).

- Strategic Focus - "The capacity to make connections between short term and long term impacts, and between micro and macro level scope" (Klauss 9).

- Proactive-anticipatory stance - The ability to "create or mold situations into preferred directions" (Klauss 10).

- Networking (Klauss 11).

2. Interpersonal Dynamics and Group Management - These competencies "involve sensitivity to individual and interpersonal dynamics, and the capacity to stimulate individual and group action in desired directions" (Klauss 13).

- Sensitivity to Personal Strengths, Weaknesses, and Biases

- Support for Staff

- Managing Diverse Interests - Ability to pull "people together around a problem and getting them to achieve agreement or consensus" (Klauss 16).

3. Problem Diagnosis and Resolution - These competencies address how an executive deals with specific problems and issues (Klauss 17).

- Concern for broad based information sources and facts

- Openmindedness - The ability "to remain flexible and openminded in considering options or facing a changed situation" (Klauss 18).

- Marketing and selling - "The importance of selling ideas, proposals, and points of view, in order to successfully implement decisions or resolve problems" (Klauss 19).

- Helicopter Management - "The need to delegate responsibility in a clear fashion, but yet retain some form of control and awareness of developments" (Klauss 21).

4. Personal Predispositions/Characteristics - Characteristics inherent to executives and not part of the other three competencies (Klauss 22).

- Risk Taking - The "willingness and propensity to take risks" - doing what's right (Klauss 22).

- Integrity/Credibility - Concern for integrity in ones own behavior, their workers, and others inside and outside of the agency (Klauss 22).

- Tenacity

- Self awareness and self confidence (Klauss 7-27).

The authors note some additional behavioral themes/competencies that emerged from their study: enthusiasm for action, capacity to shift roles, credit giving and getting, and sense of humor (Klauss 29-31).

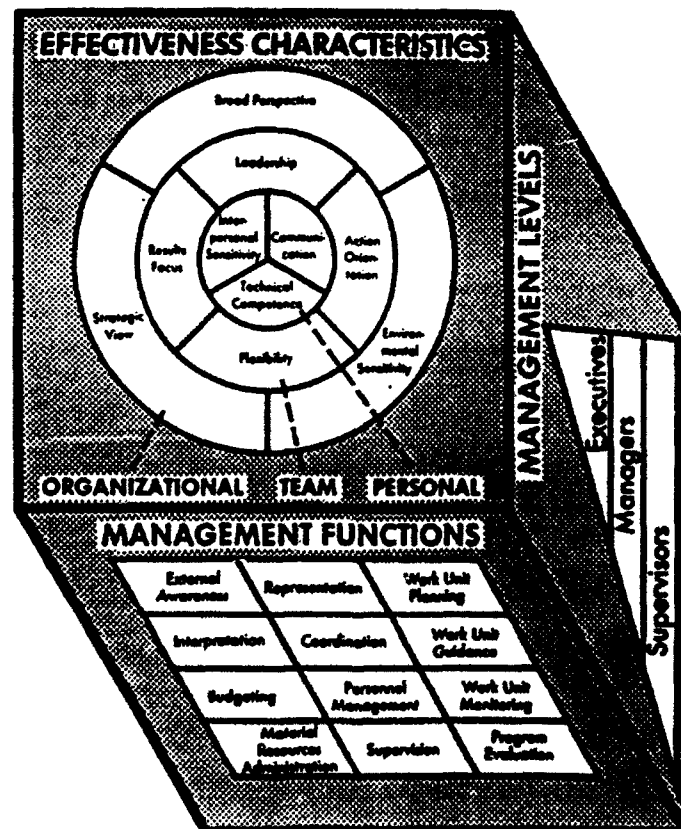
Klauss concludes from this study that executive behavior "is based on a wide angle view of the environment" (Klauss 35) and he draws some significant implications with respect to the selection and development of executives. For selection, it is important to identify executives who have experience working with many different individuals. For training and executive development he notes there are broad-view types of development courses available to enhance an individual's competencies in this area. For selection and development, consideration must also be given to the importance of interpersonal skills. Finally, he stresses that through systematic career management, agencies can prepare individuals for executive level positions (Klauss 35-36). Klauss's concluding statement, may possibly be the key to determining executive effectiveness in the Federal government -

"The identification and differentiation of key managerial competencies that are important to various levels of management, must be followed by systematic efforts to select and train officials who have the potential for serving in superior fashion in key executive positions in the career service" (Klauss 37). (See note # 5 - It appears clear that Klauss agrees that with the need for a higher level civil service.)

The Management Excellence Framework

The research performed at the Office of Personnel Management

was the precursor for the development of the competency based model, the Management Excellence Framework (MEF). The framework "describes management jobs and managerial performance in a way that distinguishes those elements that are necessary to achieve management excellence - those managerial actions that result in the successful implementation and administration of Federal policies and programs- by focusing on the who, what, and how of Federal managerial performance" (MEF 1). The model has three dimensions: Management Functions ("what" - the content of the position); Effectiveness Characteristics ("how" - the style of effective managers); and Management Levels ("who" - whether its a supervisor, manager or an executive) (MEF 1). The chart below illustrates the Management Excellence Framework.



(MEF 2)

The first part of the framework, the Management Functions which describe what executives, managers, and supervisors do (tasks, roles, and responsibilities) is made up of twelve management functions (MEF 3). Each of these dimensions, however, is not found at each of the management levels. The chart below describes each of these functions.

Management Content Dimension of the MEF Management Functions

- External Awareness:** Identifying and keeping up-to-date with key agency policies and priorities and/or external issues and trends (e.g., economic, political, social, technological) likely to affect the work unit.
- Interpretation:** Keeping subordinates informed about key agency and work unit policies, priorities, issues, and trends and how these are to be incorporated in work unit activities and products.
- Representation:** Presenting, explaining, selling, and defending the work unit's activities to supervisors, others in the agency, and/or persons and groups outside the agency.
- Coordination:** Performing liaison functions and integrating work unit activities with the activities of other organizations.
- Work Unit Planning:** Developing and deciding upon longer-term goals, objectives, and priorities; and developing and deciding among alternative courses of action.
- Work Unit Guidance:** Converting plans to actions by setting short-term objectives and priorities; scheduling/sequencing activities; and establishing effectiveness and efficiency standards/guidelines.
- Budgeting:** Preparing, justifying, and/or administering the work unit's budget.
- Material Resources Administration:** Assuring the availability of adequate supplies, equipment, facilities; overseeing procurement/contracting activities; and/or overseeing logistical operations.
- Personnel Management:** Projecting the number and types of staff needed by the work unit, and using various personnel management system components (e.g., recruitment, selection, promotion, performance appraisal) in managing the work unit.
- Supervision:** Providing day-to-day guidance and oversight of subordinates (e.g., work assignments, consultation, etc.); and actively working to promote and recognize performance.
- Work Unit Monitoring:** Keeping up-to-date on the overall status of activities in the work unit, identifying problem areas, and taking corrective actions (e.g., rescheduling, reallocating resources, etc.).
- Program Evaluation:** Critically assessing the degree to which program/project goals are achieved and/or overall effectiveness/efficiency of work unit operations, to identify means for improving work unit performance.

Note: Each management level does not necessarily perform all the aspects of each function as described here.

External Awareness	Representation	Work Unit Planning
Interpretation	Coordination	Work Unit Guidance
Budgeting	Personnel Management	Work Unit Monitoring
Material Resources Administration	Supervision	Program Evaluation

(MEF 4)

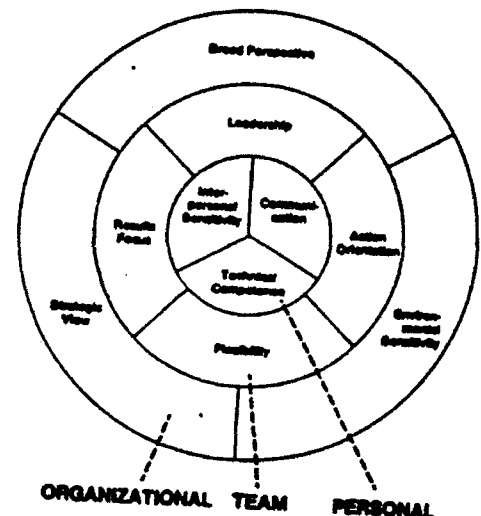
The second part of the framework, Effectiveness Characteristics, describes "how successful executives, managers and supervisors perform using skills, attitudes, and perspectives that increase the likelihood of effective performance" (MEF 3). The ten effectiveness characteristics are grouped "according to the individual, work unit or organizational performance level for which the management team is responsible and where the characteristics become critical to success" (MEF 3). There is a cumulative need for these characteristics as a person moves up the responsibility chain (MEF 3). The chart below illustrates the Effectiveness Characteristics.

Management Effectiveness Dimension of the MEF

Effectiveness Characteristics

Broad Perspective:	Broad, long-term view; balancing short- and long-term considerations.
Strategic View:	Collecting/assessing/analyzing information; problem identification/ analysis; anticipation, judgment.
Environmental Sensitivity:	"Tuned into" agency and its environment; awareness of importance of non-technical factors.
Leadership:	Individual, group; willingness to lead, manage, and accept responsibility.
Flexibility:	Openness to new information; behavioral flexibility; tolerance for stress/ambiguity/change; innovativeness.
Action Orientation:	Independence, proactivity; problem solving; calculated risk-taking, decisiveness.
Results Focus:	Concerned with goal achievement; follow through, tenacity.
Communication:	Speaking; writing; listening.
Interpersonal Sensitivity:	Self-knowledge and awareness of impact on others; sensitivity to needs/strengths/weaknesses of others; negotiation, conflict resolution; persuasion, selling.
Technical Competence:	Specialized expertise (e.g., engineering, physical science, law, accounting, social science).

Note: Each management level does not necessarily perform all the aspects of each characteristic as described here.



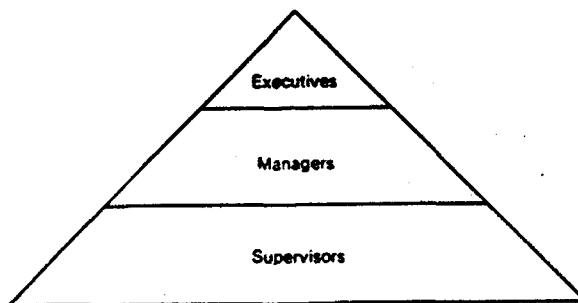
(MEF 5)

The last part of the framework, Management Level, describes the three levels of management - executives, managers, and supervisors whose performance the framework describes (MEF 6). The point made here is that the differences between management levels is a function of increases in the "scope and breadth" of job requirements not in the number of people managed or difficulty of technical subject matter (MEF 6). The chart below describes the Management Levels.

Management Level Dimension of the MEF

Management Levels

- Executives:** Have the most complex jobs and generally are members of the Senior Executive Service.
- Managers:** Have broader, more complex responsibilities than supervisors; become more involved in coordinating the work of others and dealing with longer-range issues than supervisors; may or may not manage subordinate supervisors.
- Supervisors:** Have first-level responsibility for managing day-to-day operations and carrying out directives from higher management.

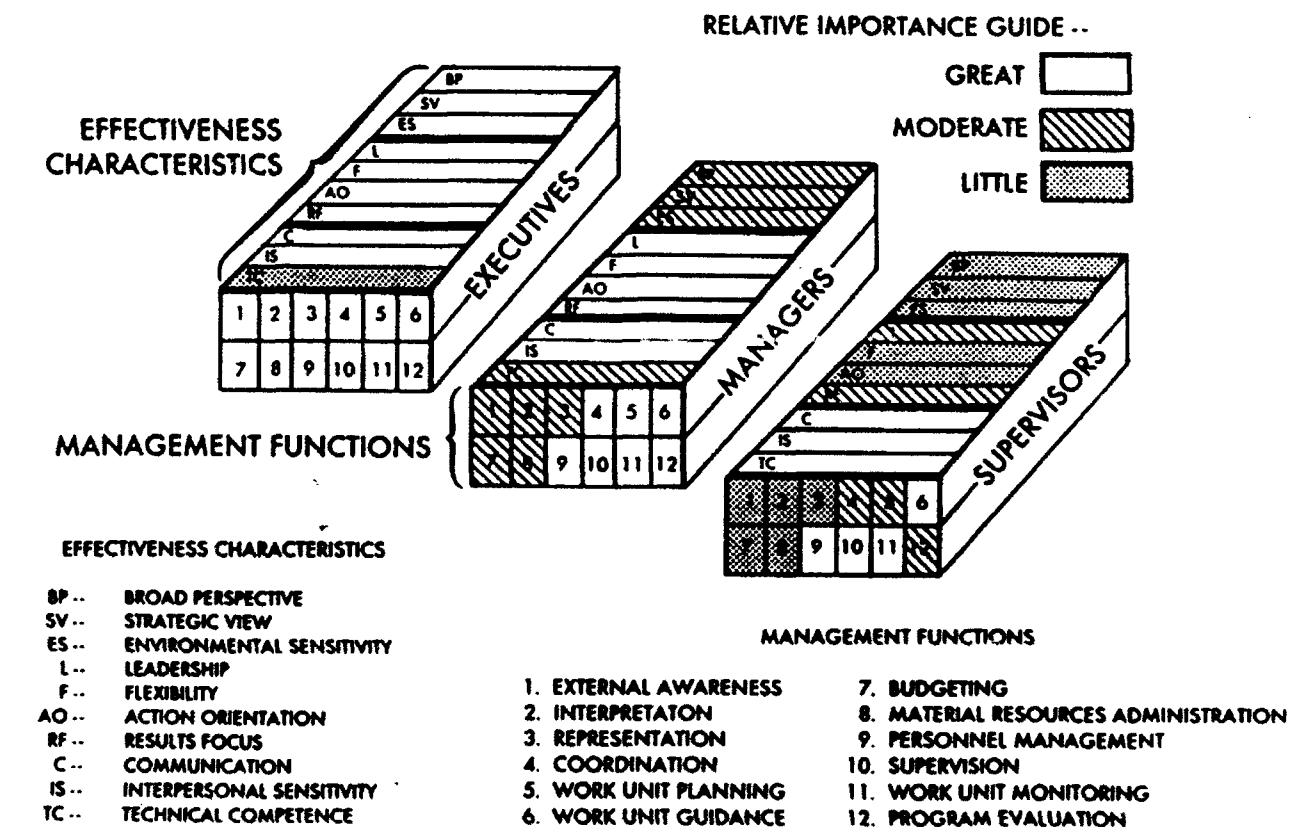


(MEF 6)

Lastly, the researchers integrated the results of several studies with the characteristics of the Management Effectiveness Framework to show the relative importance of the characteristics at the various management levels. The significance of this work is its use in charting the "nature and progression of a management career" (MEF 7). As can be seen, as an individual moves up to higher levels of management, only the importance of technical competence declines. The chart that follows clearly shows the competencies individuals need as they progress through the management levels.

Management Excellence Framework

Comparison by Level



(MEF 8)

The Management Excellence Inventory

The practical application of the Management Excellence Framework is the Management Excellence Inventory (MEI). Flanders and Utterback in "The Management Excellence Inventory: A Tool for Management Development, describe the Management Excellence Inventory as a questionnaire designed to measure the management elements of the Management Excellence Framework. The two versions of the questionnaire - one for executives and managers (middle and senior level executive positions) and one for supervisors (lower level supervisory positions) reflect the differences in scope and responsibility of the different levels of management jobs. The MEI has two purposes:

- "1. to generate position-specific profiles of management requirements and of individual strengths and needs vis-a-vis these requirements, and
2. to track similarities and differences in management jobs, strengths, and development needs by grade level, type of function managed, job location, and other relevant variables" (Flan/Utt 403).

To do this, the MEI collects four kinds of information - "job and demographic information, significance ratings of management functions, required proficiency, and present proficiency ratings of job tasks and actions" (Flan/Utt 408). Because this instrument is designed to help both the individual and the organization, it can be taken by an individual, the individual's supervisor, as well as subordinates, and can be used in many ways.

The MEI can identify the differences between an individual's required proficiency and their present proficiency (identifying

strengths and weakness), leading therefore to appropriate development training. In a more general sense it can be used to identify the skills needed to be effective in specific positions, and therefore serve as the basis for selection. Although the MEI deals with general management functions and effectiveness characteristics, it can be tailored to specific positions by adding to the current questionnaire (Flan/Utt 408).

According to Dan Corts and Donna Gregory of the Office of Personnel Research and Development, the Office of Personnel Management has recently begun an overall revision to both the Management Excellence Framework and the Management Excellence Inventory. The Office of Personnel Management plans to survey (through the use of a questionnaire) 21,000 government employees in the GS 11 through Senior Executive Service levels. Unlike the MEI, this survey, the Leadership Effectiveness Survey (LES) is much broader. It will serve to gather background information (to include demographics); data on managerial tasks, managerial competencies, and occupational descriptions; and information about personal and organizational style (LES 0-1 - 0-2).

According to Corts and Gregory this work is part of an even broader effort by the Office of Personnel Management to build an occupational data base to support the development of all human resources management programs. The eventual result of this effort will be its applications for selection (developing qualification standards and selection procedures), training, and development.

Executive Development Programs

Many agencies in the executive branch of the government have centralized executive development programs designed to identify and prepare individuals for Senior Executive Service positions. At present, the Army does not have a centralized executive development program. What the Army does do, however, is look to each of the civilian career programs to identify, train, and develop future senior leaders. Although many of the career programs have published development plans, many of those plans do not go through the Senior Executive Service level.

Both the National Security Agency and the Internal Revenue Service have had Executive Development Programs for many years. Generally speaking, individuals selected to participate in these programs go on to become members of the Senior Executive Service. I'll highlight the unique features of each of the programs.

According to Jill Thomas, Executive Development Program Manager at the National Security Agency (NSA), approximately 50 individuals are selected at a time for their Senior Cryptologic Executive Development Program. During the three years an individual participates in the program, they perform their regular jobs and participate in internal and external training programs and developmental assignments.

Two unique features about this program merit mentioning. First, is that members of the Executive Development Panel (the panel that interviews the candidates and makes recommendations for selection) are all trained in interviewing techniques.

Second, is the fact that the mentors assigned to each individual in the program are also trained. Approximately 80-90 percent of all participants become members of the Senior Executive Service (Thomas).

The Executive Selection and Development Program at the Internal Revenue Service runs a little differently. According to Carol Nuthall, Chief, Executive Support Staff, after the applications are screened by her office they go through a full day "event/interview". This past year the "event" took the form of participation in a group exercise, an oral presentation, and an individual interview.⁸

When a person is selected for the program they leave their job and spend 6 months in intensive training (for example, moving around to various levels of the organization, and participating in individually selected developmental activities). At the conclusion of the first part of the program they are assigned to a permanent GM 15 position for 18 months to 2 years. This assignment, which may be as an assistant district director in a small region, will lead the individual directly into a Senior Executive Service position. Everyone that completes this program becomes a senior executive (Nuthall).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Clearly, no conclusion can be drawn from this review as to whether the Army is inadvertently not selecting the best people to fill Senior Executive Service positions. Neither can a

definitive conclusion be drawn as to whether the Army is missing important information regarding the kinds of personality or behavioral characteristics that are necessary for successful performance in specific positions. What has become clearer as a result of this review, is that these questions need to be asked and the issues explored further. Particularly in a time of downsizing and re-organization of the Army, it is imperative we have only the best senior civilian leadership.

My review of the literature on leadership and "effective executives" makes it clear there are certain characteristics that "effective executives" need in order to succeed. The literature also suggests that there are differences between management in the public and private sectors, and even differences in the management of government organizations. Different jobs may in fact require different kinds of leadership skills, although there does not appear to be much research into this area. There even appears to be general agreement in the literature about job complexity - that is, as an individual moves up the organizational ladder the job becomes more complex, therefore, demanding the individual possess different capabilities (cognitive skills) to be successful. And then there's the dimension of the organization - and Elliot Jaques "requisite organization," - and the fact that according to Dr. Jaques, the civilian side of the Army is not organized properly.

The work done by the Office of Personnel Management and cited in this paper, is all headed in the right direction. The

current work being done by the Army Research Institute begins to get at the issue of job task analysis and job selection. However, at this point, that work does not include a look at Senior Executive Service positions, nor does it appear that work will include a look at the personality or behavioral characteristics needed for success.

What needs to be done? The first question that still needs answering is whether or not the factors leading to "executive effectiveness" in Senior Executive Service positions in the Army differ for the various different kinds of positions. Does a scientist sitting on a bench, or a pathologist in a laboratory need the same skills to be successful as a headquarters policy manager? That question can only be answered by performing extensive interviews with the individuals currently in those positions and considering such things - but not limiting the interviews to - tasks performed, job complexity, personality attributes, and organizational dimensions. Detailed and comprehensive position descriptions are a necessity. The foundations for gathering this information have already been laid by both the Army and the Office of Personnel Management.

Next, the Army needs to look at how they go about selecting individuals into the Senior Executive Service. They need to determine if the selection process should be more rigorous and more standardized. Although the current process complies with all regulations, it is not standardized. There is no standard operating procedure for either selection officials or ranking/

selection panels to follow. There was also no evidence during this review that selection officials received any specific training nor that any sort of list of specific or peculiar qualities needed for success in a SES position was available to them. It was clear, however, that selection officials have a lot of flexibility, and could individually tailor the process to look for such things as behavioral or personality traits that might be needed for success in a specific SES position.

The bottom line is, that it's not easy to select senior leaders. It is imperative, therefore, that the Army use a rigorous process for selection. The Army needs to seriously consider what that process should entail, and should consider the possibility of using an assessment center and a structured interview procedure. The Army should also consider the issue of training the people who will be conducting the assessment, interview, and selection process.

The Army also should consider using standardized tests as one portion of the selection process. Although FPM 337, section 1-5i, precludes the use of personality tests for selecting individuals into the competitive service, further study should be done in this area.

The Army also needs to look at, and seriously consider, restructuring the civilian organization so that the manager-subordinate relationship is well defined. This recommendation does not just apply to the Senior Executive Service but to the entire civilian side of the Army.

Lastly, if you agree with Robert Katz, as many researchers do, that "effective executives" are not born but are developed, it is be extremely important then for the Army to initiate a Senior Executive Service development program. There is no doubt that the Army has talented individuals waiting in the wings to become tomorrow's senior leaders. The critical job facing the Army, therefore, is to identify and develop those individuals to "be all that they can be."

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NOTES

1. The Army groups the 350 Senior Executive Service positions into the following nine categories: Engineers and Scientists (non-construction), Engineers and Scientists (construction), Logistics, Legal, Program Management, Personnel, Procurement and Other.

The majority of the Senior Executive Service positions in the Army (in descending order by number) are located at the Army Materiel Command, in the Office of the Secretary of the Army, in the Corps of Engineers and on the Army Staff. The remainder of the positions are located in the Office of the Surgeon General, the Training and Doctrine Command, the Forces Command, and the Military Management Traffic Command. Approximately 1/2 of 1 percent of the total number of positions do not fit into any of these categories.

2. For a complete explanation of the Howard and Bray (1988) dimensions, the reader is referred to:

Howard A., and D.W. Bray. Managerial Lives in Transition: Advancing Age and Changing Times. New York: Guilford Press, 1988.

However, the 26 dimensions contained in their book follow:

Administrative Skills

1. Organizing and Planning
2. Decision Making
3. Creativity

Interpersonal Skills

4. Leadership Skills
5. Oral Communication Skills
6. Behavior Flexibility
7. Personal Impact
8. Social Objectivity
9. Perception of Threshold Social Cues

Intellectual Ability

10. General Mental Ability
11. Range of Interests
12. Written Communication Skills

Stability of Performance

13. Tolerance of Uncertainty
14. Resistance to Stress

Work Involvement

15. Primacy of Work
16. Inner Work Standards

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- 17. Energy
- 18. Self-Objectivity
- Advancement Motivation
 - 19. Need for Advancement
 - 20. Need for Security
 - 21. Ability to Delay Gratification
 - 22. Realism of Expectations
 - 23. Organization Value Orientation
 - 24. Need for superior Approval
 - 25. Need for Peer Approval
 - 26. Goal Flexibility (Corts 5-45)

3. A brief listing of the kinds of personal characteristics that David Campbell talks about for carrying out each of his seven tasks of leadership follows:

- 1. Vision - experience, imagination, persuasiveness, farsightedness, and political astuteness
- 2. Management - accountability, personnel policies, and thriftiness
- 3. Empowerment - compassion, sensitivity, psychological insight
- 4. Politics - contacts, friendliness, wit, negotiation skills
- 5. Feedback - empathy, strong self-concept, tenacious follow-through
- 6. Personal Style - optimistic, trustworthy
- 7. Interrelationship of Tasks - physical energy and psychological durability (Campbell 1-3).

4. In a telephone interview with Dr. Jaques he told me he feels strongly that the civilian organization within the Army needs to be organized much more like the military organization (what he called the "combat organization") in order to achieve management accountability.

5. The same point is made in the background paper prepared by Mark W. Huddleston, The Government's Managers, A Report to the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Senior Executive Service. The point he makes is for the establishment of a "higher civil service." Unlike the United States, in other countries (particularly in Western Europe - and most notably in France), civil servants have a strong notion of "career." When a person signs on to public service, it is not a job but a life commitment and the government plays an active role in developing and guiding these individuals (Huddleston 80-81).

6. From the responses to the Federal Managers' Job and Role Survey, of mid-managers and members of the SES, the following broad activity areas were found to be common at both levels:

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Program, Policy, and Organizational Unit management

- o Planning, budgeting, prioritizing, scheduling;
- o Reviewing, monitoring, assessing, evaluating program-policy issues, problems, outcomes;
- o Diagnosing organizational problems, introducing change, reorganization, redesign, etc.

Human Resources Management

- o Working with subordinates, boss, peers in agency, and others; dealing with people issues;
- o Integrating the efforts of others, coordinating, consulting, directing;
- o Oral and written communication.

External Relations Management

- o Networking, keeping up-to-date, information dissemination, representing unit (Flanders 33).

7. A detailed description of the implications and applications of this work can be found in Flanders, Loretta. "Senior Executive Service Mid Managers' Job Profiles, Report I From the Federal Manager's Job and Role Survey: Analysis of Responses by SES and Mid management Levels." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1981. 33-40.

8. It is interesting to note that this is essentially the same process the Office of Personnel Management uses to screen candidates for the Presidential Management Intern Program (a program designed to identify, hire and train future government managers and leaders). The only significant difference is that candidates for the PMI Program must also complete a writing exercise.